



THE SENTINEL

Vol. 24, No. 1

The Newsletter of the New Scotland Historical Association

Fall 2015

For the Love of History: An Exemplary Team

When Marion Parmenter definitively announced at a New Scotland Historical Association Board meeting in the spring of 2014 that she and husband Bob would only produce *The Sentinel* for one more year, there was a hush in the room. Everyone knew that “Marion meant what she said,” and that would mean finding new editors. I personally recall saying to myself that night, “There is no way I will tackle that job.” Generating fresh ideas, finding writers, facing deadlines, and ultimately getting the paper to print four times a year would be a year-long commitment.

Fast forward a year later: with the encouragement of new president Debbie Mahan, I jumped in. In order to follow the Parmenters’ 15 year tenure, I knew to “fill their big shoes” would take a full team effort. I also needed to figure out how these two very opposite personalities were able to survive a 49 year marriage, teaching careers while raising children, downsizing a life-time home along with building another home at the same time, and still keep the enthusiasm under a lot of pressure.

Grabbing my Samsung tablet, merely inches away, I quickly Googled the traits of a successful team, followed by the secrets to a long-time marriage. It is there that I found my start to Bob and Marion’s success. One particular article was all I needed: *Characteristics of Effective Teams*, by Nancy Martin. I thought she had used the Parmenters as her resource: common purpose, clear goals, diverse skills and personality, strong communication and collaboration, along with trust and commitment. If you look at different lists of successful marriage traits, they are practically synonymous: marriage is a team.

Next, I reached out to those who know them the best: friends, family, and association members. Fellow NSHA board member Peg Dorgan thinks that it is Bob’s interest in history along with Marion’s “living the history in the Town of New Scotland” that really compliments each other. When Peg invited Marie Hornick to join NSHA because of her love for history and things related to writing, Marie soon volunteered to work on the next *Sentinel* as occasional writer and all-important proofreader. Bob and Marion’s ability to communicate and collaborate was quite evident. Marie learned the lesson, “If I want to write about something, talk to either Bob or Marion for information or just good ideas.” Each could see the stories possible in a topic and write a good article that would attract interest. Both had the commitment to spend hours putting things together, while making suggestions for the benefit of NSHA. A new updated computer, investing in more modern equipment to gather and store information, encouraging new people to join committees or take on an assignment embody all of the characteristics of effective team members. Marie values the “easy friendship among us; Bob and Marion were so easy to get to know, so knowledgeable and friendly.”

Everyone who has experienced Team Parmenter will tell you that these two opposites are an unbelievably cohesive pair. No one better knows this than daughter Heather Reiffer and son Jerry Parmenter. Both were incredibly excited and happy to jump in to share when I asked for their assistance figuring out this complimentary pair. When I mentioned their distinctly different personalities, Jerry let me know that “My mom may be the driving force, but it is my father that gets the job done!” I chuckled, imagining Marion talking a mile-a-minute, flitting from one thing to another, as Bob is trying to keep her focused on the task at hand. Heather believes her mom’s tenacity and hard-working ethic pairs beautifully with her father’s patient, laid-back personality. “It is their sense of humor that ties them together, and our family. Laughter is what I remember most about all our family trips, (that and a lot of Civil War monuments!)-constant fun and teasing.” Nothing is stopping their zest for knowledge and life.

The New Scotland Historical Society is fortunate to have the Parmenters as devoted, passionate members. We can count on Marion and Bob to continue mentoring, inspiring, and nurturing all of us through their life-long love of history.



Sherry Burgoon, Editor

**NEW
SCOTLAND
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION**

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President's Letter

Dear Members and Friends,

As I write this, summer is winding down, with shorter days reminding us that the fall season is not far away.

Thankfully, the weather cooperated with farmers and gardeners this summer: enough rain each week for adequate water, with breaks of very warm, sunny days to promote growth. The apple trees are full with ripening fruit and large orange pumpkins are starting to peek out from under their shady canopies of leaves.



In this issue we are recognizing the importance of farming and home gardening in the town of New Scotland throughout its history. The New York State Census of 1915 for the town lists "farmer" as the occupation for a large percentage of the town citizens. Although much of the farmland is disappearing as homes and businesses are built, we can still appreciate the many farmers who are still working hard; in particular, Indian Ladder Farms, a family-run farm that has been in operation continuously for the last 100 years and now employs between 80-100 seasonal employees in the peak months of apple picking. Hopefully you will have an opportunity to visit a local farm this year and take advantage of fresh produce grown on a neighboring farm.

Also in this issue, we have included our program schedule for the historical programs that will be presented at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center in the coming months. Alan Kowlowitz, program chairperson, has arranged to have a variety of speakers that will certainly provide us some memorable evenings. These programs are free and we hope you will be able to attend.

Finally, this is the first issue of *The Sentinel* for new editor Sherry Burgoon and team. We all wish them the best and a lot of support, so our membership can continue to enjoy receiving the quarterly newsletter.

Debbie Mahan, President

Mission Statement

The Town of New Scotland Historical Association preserves, protects and promotes history in the Town of New Scotland through the stewardship of material culture directly related to the town. The purpose is to promote an appreciation of local history, heritage and culture through research, publications and educational programs.

THE MUSEUM WILL BE OPEN ELECTION DAY
November 3, 2015

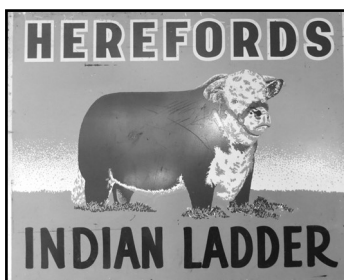
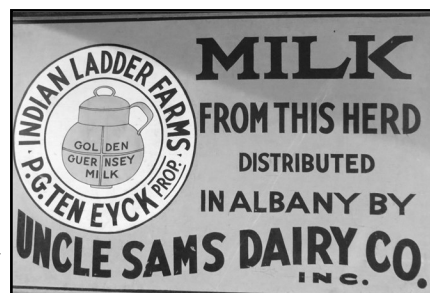
Museum Closed
October 11 (Columbus Day Weekend)
November 29 (Thanksgiving)
December 27 (Christmas)

INDIAN LADDER FARMS

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS IN THE TOWN OF NEW SCOTLAND

If you live in or near the Town of New Scotland, there is a good chance that you have experienced the joy of picking and eating apples while walking through row after row of tempting, ripe fruit on a cool autumn day at Indian Ladder Farms, tucked into a perfect spot beneath the Helderbergs. In 2016, we can all celebrate this family-run gem that has been supplying us with milk, beef, dairy products, apples, pears, berries and much more for one hundred years.

The soil and climate are just two of the factors that contribute to making the farm so successful. Initially, it took the foresight and hard work of Peter Gansevoort Ten Eyck, born 1873 in Bethlehem on a large farm at the corner we now know as Whitehall Road and Delaware Avenue (Albany). This Peter G. Ten Eyck (not to be confused with his son, Peter G.D. Ten Eyck, or grandson and current owner, Peter G. Ten Eyck II, or great-grandson who assists his father in managing the farm, Peter G. Ten Eyck III) was a well-educated man who graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute with a degree in engineering, was a chief signal engineer for the New York Central Railroad, was elected to Congress, and served as State Commissioner of Agriculture, plus many more noteworthy positions and hobbies. This same Peter G. Ten Eyck had a lifelong love for farming and agriculture that influenced him along the way.



When Mr. Ten Eyck resigned from his position at Ag and Markets in 1937, he returned to manage his beloved farm, named Indian Ladder Farms for the five original farms that he purchased and merged into one. In those days, there were pure bred Guernsey cattle to produce milk, as well as chickens, and of course, rows of apple and pear trees. When the barn that housed the cows burned down in 1949, the decision was made to sell the Guernseys at the Altamont Fair. The next phase of farming for the family was raising Hereford beef cattle, while still keeping some acres for the fruit trees. That all changed again in 1963, when the decision was made to concentrate on the apple orchard.

Today's farm, one hundred years in the making, is owned and operated by Peter G. Ten Eyck II, grandson of the original owner. He is part of a team who make decisions for the future, as well as current farm operations. Peter's daughter, Laura Ten Eyck, and her husband Detrich Gehring, have also established a new hop yard, and are growing malting barley. They will open the Indian Ladder Farmstead Brewery and Cidery featuring a tasting room on the farm as soon as state and federal licensing paperwork is completed. Laura and Detrich have also recently written a book called "The Hop Grower's Handbook", which will be released by Chelsea Green Publishing in September of this year.



I was privileged to walk through the orchard recently with Peter Ten Eyck as he stopped by the different seedlings (also known as "pips") telling me the name and characteristics of each variety. The science behind the growth of fruit trees is extensive, and as grandfather Peter Ten Eyck said in an article of the **Albany Evening News** in June, 1937, *a farmer needs to be a mineralogist, entomologist, chemist, carpenter, plumber, electrician, mason, blacksmith, architect and above all, a financier and good business man*. Obviously, these skills have been passed down through the generations in the Ten Eyck family.

Indian Ladder Farms works with the Cornell experiment station in Geneva to grow and test unnamed, numbered varieties. The small seedlings are trained to grow upward on small poles to help increase their yield. This year, the two newest named varieties in New York are "Snapdragon" and "Ruby Frost", and in a few weeks, these crisp apples will be available at the farm. I am looking forward to a trip to Indian Ladder Farms to try them!

Debbie Mahan, *The Sentinel* Writer

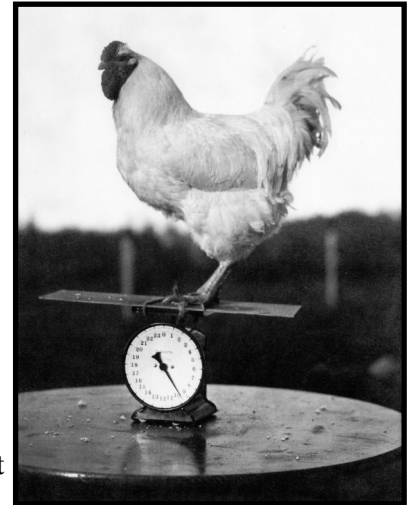
The 1950's, a Small New Scotland Farm, and the Egg Route

Early in the summer morning the creak and bang of the cellar door opening is the alarm clock that jars me awake. It must be Thursday, egg route day. Leaping out of bed, I join my grandmother, grandfather, father, mother, and two older brothers (all of whom have been up long before me) in our weekly procession, carrying the candled, cleaned, sorted, and boxed-up eggs from the cool, damp stone and earthen cellar to the family car. Since it is summer, we also carry up all the bags of fresh produce so recently picked from our garden. By mid to late summer, we are harvesting green and yellow string beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, red and purple raspberries, and sweet corn. We carry armload after armload across the dewy grass, handing off our load to my dad who somehow manages to stash everything in the car in a sequence of accessibility that matches the order of the stops. Along with the eggs and produce, somewhere in that car Dad also finds room for a couple of live chickens and, usually, a couple of dressed chickens as well.

In the 1950s, similar scenes would be occurring on many family farms throughout the Town of New Scotland. One day per week was designated as Egg Route Day, a day to embark upon a dot-to-dot path of egg, chicken, and produce customers with the final dot being the open air market in Albany's old pre-Empire Plaza downtown. This was one way a little cash income could be obtained from the surplus of the family garden and chicken flock.

For a child, Egg Route Day was a fascinating view of life beyond the family farm. I know because at least one time during the summer, my brothers and I would each get a turn to ride along on the Egg Route. There in the car I would sit between my dad (the driver) and my grandmother (the manager). At each stop, one of them would get out and carry to the customer's door whatever had been ordered the week before and, sometimes, a bag of especially abundant produce that we hoped she (almost always she) would buy. Then, on to the next stop.

At first, our stops were at well-known country neighbors, then the suburbs (Delmar), then houses that became closer and closer together. Soon we would be stopping on city streets, and I would marvel at the tall brown buildings all attached together. On each corner there seemed to be a little grocery store. Imagine that! Having a store just a few steps away! Just think! A kid with a spare dime could just hop over any time she wanted and buy a soda!



We were not the only ones making door-to-door deliveries. Like us, there was the *Freihofer* bread man making his stops, except his delivery vehicle was a horse drawn carriage complete with dangling feedbag!

At most of the stops, I just sat and waited in the car. But once in awhile, if my grandmother thought the customer really liked kids, she would let me go into the customer's house with her. Quite often these were Italian housewives who, for some delightful reason, would slip a nickel, a dime, or even a quarter into my hand as we left! Of course, this newly acquired wealth would immediately start burning a hole in my pocket.

Finally, we reached downtown Albany's open air market. We joined the large assembly of other parked cars and, opening the trunk, we set up shop to hopefully sell what remained of our wares. There was an Italian woman who would come and buy a live chicken. Right there she would wring the chicken's neck, then take it home to prepare. Talk about fresh chicken! Another customer ordered a chicken every week. We would deliver that chicken to the rabbi, and he took things from there.

When late morning came, it was time to leave the farmers' market for home. First we would stop at Chuckrow's Market, and he bought any of our leftover eggs (wholesale). Next came our visit to the A&P to pick out our weekly groceries. I'm sure much of the day's take was spent here. While walking the aisles with my grandmother, I wondered aloud how to spend *my* recently acquired coinage. Grandma would always recommend the purchasing of a box of animal crackers decorated to look like a circus wagon with a shoestring handle. That was excellent advice. The crackers were usually gone before we arrived home. At the checkout counter, the groceries were packed in a large cardboard box. Only the things that would not fit were placed in brown paper bags.

Now, home.

It is hard to believe that all this was accomplished before noon! After all, dinner had to be on the table at 12 o'clock (Our evening meal was supper.). Then, after dinner, whatever produce had not been sold was "put up" for use during the winter. Out the canner would come, and an afternoon of preserving would get underway!

Judy Kimes, *The Sentinel* Writer

Late Summer's Bounty

Summer days grow noticeably shorter. First frost all too quickly approaches. Gardens and orchards large and small exert their final thrust of productivity. Now, as in days gone by, the race to fully utilize all that output is on!

All summer long, large farm stands and farmers' markets have set the pace. First, the long awaited strawberries. Next come raspberries, blueberries, peppers, tomatoes, corn, apples, and finally pumpkins, signaling the inevitable close of the growing season.

In late summer, smaller farm stands, often operating on the honor system, appear. And sometimes one sees a small array of free produce set out along the road, its grower just happy to know that the overabundance of his garden does not go to waste.

When small farms were numerous in the Town of New Scotland, many local families found ways to supplement their income by selling surplus produce or homemade products. Young people could earn a little cash by helping to pick the raspberries, currants, peaches, apples, and other small fruit that would find its way to the markets in downtown Albany. Pies, cookies, jams, and jellies would be produced and sold in small grocery stores or on the sidewalks outside. Extra apples were pressed into cider. This was sold (while still sweet) to anyone who heard of it and showed up with a jug.

In the '50s, this writer's family's "farm stand" was a card table set up at the end of our driveway during homeward bound rush hour. On it were tomatoes, green and yellow beans, and red and purple raspberries (60 cents a quart). In the shade of a nearby tree would be the sweet corn (50 cents per baker's dozen) Mom had just picked before going to the barn to help with the milking. Each day's proceeds were stashed in an A&P tea tin. At the end of the season, the cash was counted up. Some was put aside for next year's seeds. The rest went to all of us workers! My first payday!

As summer comes to an end, it is gratifying to note how much our local residents appreciate the produce so abundantly grown here. Thank you to our town's farmers and gardeners past and present who tend their fruit trees and bushes all year, and who put those seeds in the soil each spring for the delicious benefit of us all!

(With thanks to Lorraine Felter)

Judy Kimes, *The Sentinel* Writer

WORD SEARCH

Submitted by Art Thorman, Sentinel Committee

TOWN OF NEW SCOTLAND FARM STANDS

E	W	F	R	U	I	T	S	X	K	F	R	S	Y	A
C	H	S	J	B	W	S	E	S	R	L	E	N	T	Z
U	O	D	I	U	B	V	C	I	K	L	W	W	S	M
D	L	O	J	P	R	A	E	A	B	P	P	A	A	J
O	E	O	Y	D	U	N	Z	A	L	S	K	G	T	H
R	S	G	N	H	D	S	T	S	R	E	W	O	L	F
P	O	D	Y	L	T	E	H	O	R	F	S	N	G	M
D	M	E	Y	E	G	L	D	C	R	M	C	S	G	C
X	E	K	F	E	N	N	A	E	A	Y	C	I	U	J
C	A	A	V	X	E	O	S	E	D	R	V	O	J	U
Z	F	B	O	V	Z	H	M	I	H	M	T	W	D	C
F	L	A	V	O	R	F	U	L	C	U	D	S	Q	R

BAKEDGOODS	FLAVORFUL	FLOWERS
FRESH	FRIENDLY	FRUITS
HEALTHY	JUICY	MONEY
PRODUCE	PUSHCARTS	SCALES
TASTY	VEGETABLES	VENDORS
WAGONS	WHOLESOME	

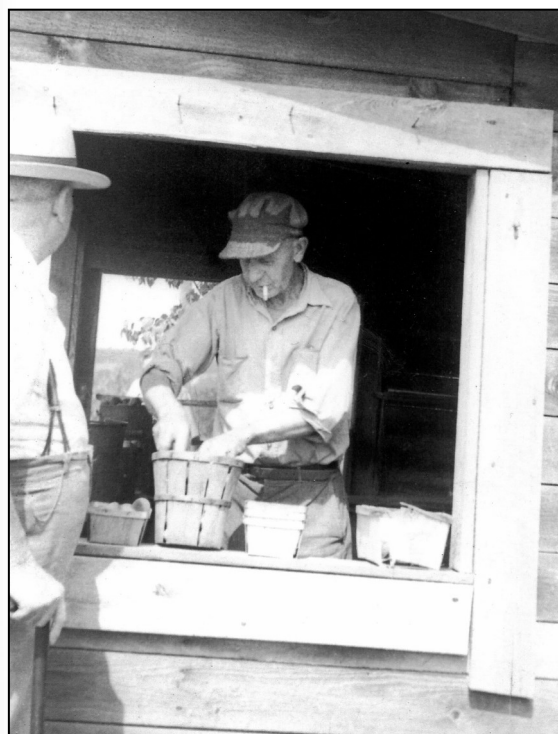


Photo submitted by Don Slingerland

New Scotland Historical Association High School Junior Award Winning Essay

Eliza Jobin-Davis

Over the past one hundred and seventeen years, the Town of New Scotland has had the distinct privilege of being home to the Hilton Barn, established by the revered Frank Osterhout, adjacent to what is known as the Le Vie farm on Route 85A. The largest post-and-beam structure ever built in Albany County, this 60-foot wide, 120-foot long and 60-foot tall barn, serves as a defining historical landmark for our Town. However, despite its historical importance, the existence of the Hilton Barn is in jeopardy. In the face of losing such an important symbol of our local agricultural history, the Town of New Scotland has worked incessantly to protect the barn, making it one of the greatest historical issues currently facing the people of this Town.

The current owners of the barn, Country Club Partners, announced in 2014 that with a lack of sufficient uses and no interested buyers, the demolition of the Hilton Barn would occur on February 28th, 2015 if no proposals for relocation were announced. Now the deadline for the barn's deconstruction is May 31. responsibility for raising the minimum \$500,000 to deconstruct, relocate and reconstruct the barn now rests on the shoulders of this community, including its youth.

Viable solutions to this pressing challenge include advocacy through social media websites and school classrooms, to increase awareness within the younger community. Already, a Facebook page has been established to support our cause. Use of other social networking applications like Twitter and Instagram can help stress the importance and relevance of the Barn's preservation. An essential aspect of our advocacy is also recalling the barn's destruction by a fire in 1900, and then its generous restoration by 160 men, showing significant meaning to the people of our Town. It is also interesting to discover that Frank Osterhout also build many other municipal building in Voorheesville that are still prominent today. If the accounts were created by interested students, youth would be more likely to push for raising funds through school fundraisers and reaching out to local organizations or agencies, such as the Albany county Industrial Development Agency. The Hilton Barn's preservation remains a current and pressing issue for the Town of New Scotland, and through youth collaboration, it is more likely that we will reach a successful outcome.



If you would like to become a member, please do so!

NSHA Membership Form

\$10 Individual
 \$15 Family
 \$25 Sustaining
 \$100.00 Life (per person)

Name _____

Street _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Make checks payable to NSHA.

Please send dues to:

Sarita Winchell
NSHA Membership Chair
279 Helderberg Pkwy
Voorheesville, NY 12186

Photos: The Hilton Barn and Le Vie's Farm Stand
(August, 2015)

New Scotland Historical Association's Program Schedule 2015-16
(Titles are tentative and subject to change)

Oct. 6, 2015 - The People of Watervliet: Unexpected Stories of Life in the Albany Shaker Community - Samantha Hall Saladino, Education Director at the Shaker Heritage Society, will reveal the fascinating stories of some of the individual Shakers who lived at the Albany community.

Nov. 1, 2015 (2:00-4:00pm) —The Battle of the Normanskill through African-American Eyes – Aaron Mair, Environmentalist and local historian, will discuss the little known story of the Battle of the Normanskill and the role played African-American patriots who were part of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment.

Dec. 1, 2015 – The Meneely Bell foundry - Dr. P. Thomas Carroll, Senior Scholar of the Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway, will reveal the history of the four foundries, in and across the river from Troy which from 1808 until 1951 cast and shipped bells to destinations all over the world.

Feb. 2, 2016 – The Treasures of New Scotland - New Scotland Town Historian Bob Parmenter will give a cooks tour of New Scotland's most historically significant and interesting structures. Find out about the historical treasures in our own backyard!

March 1, 2016 —A History of the General Electric Company Through Aural and Visual Records - Dr. Gerald Zahavi, University of Albany Professor, provides a unique look at the history of the General Electric Corporation as told by the managers, engineers, scientists, and blue- and pink-collar workers who built and sustained the company.

April 5, 2016 –The Impact of the Irish 1916 Easter Rebellion on the Capital District – Learn how this momentous event affected our own region (Speaker TBA).

May 3, 2016 – An Evening with George Wilson – Master fiddler, multi-instrumentalist and singer George Wilson explores some of the roots of contemporary folk music and presents various regional fiddle styles. Find out what our ancestors were tapping their toes to 100 Years Ago!

All Programs will be held at the Wyman Osterhout Community Center and scheduled from 7:30-9:30pm unless otherwise indicated

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Museum Hours

**The museum is
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on Sunday**

from

2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

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THE SENTINEL

New Scotland Historical Association

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